

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of heat-treatment of a package, comprising:
 - placing a number of packages in a retort,
 - pressurising the retort to a first pressure by the supply of a gaseous pressurisation medium with low moisture content, ~~such as air or the like,~~
 - supplying a heating medium for heating the package and the product packed in the package,
 - raising, in connection with the supply of the heating medium, the pressure in the retort to a second pressure, and
 - reducing, during the final phase of the heat-treatment, the pressure in the retort in such a manner that the pressure in the packaging material and the pressure within the package is higher than or equal to the pressure prevailing in the retort outside the package.
2. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said first pressure is at least approximately 1 bar.
3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of 3 to 6 bar.
5. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said heating medium is steam.
6. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 5, further comprising supplying water via a number of nozzles to the outside of the packages.
7. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, comprising selecting, as package, a package of a paper-based packaging laminate.
8. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed Claim 2, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of 3 to 6 bar.
9. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim ~~[[3]]~~ 6, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of 3 to 6 bar.
10. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed Claim ~~[[4]]~~ 7, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of 3 to 6 bar.
11. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein said heating medium is steam.

12. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim ~~[[3]]~~ 22, wherein said heating medium is steam.

13. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 4, wherein said heating medium is steam.

14. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim ~~[[5]]~~ 7, wherein said heating medium is steam.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 2, comprising selecting, as package, a package of a paper-based packaging laminate.

16. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim ~~[[3]]~~ 22, comprising selecting, as package, a package of a paper-based packaging laminate.

17. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim ~~[[7]]~~ 13, comprising the step of selecting, as package, a package of a paper-based packaging laminate.

18 (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said first pressure is approximately 2 bar.

19. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said first pressure is approximately 3 bar.

20. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second pressure is of the order of magnitude of approximately 4 to 5 bar.

21. (New) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said gaseous pressurisation medium with low moisture content comprises air.

22. (New) A method of heat-treatment of a package, comprising:
placing a number of packages in a retort,
pressurising the retort by the supply of a gaseous pressurisation medium with low moisture content,
supplying a heating medium for heating the package and the product packed in the package, and
reducing, during the final phase of the heat-treatment, the pressure in the retort in such a manner that the pressure in the packaging material and the pressure within the package is higher than or equal to the pressure prevailing in the retort outside the package.

23. (New) The method as claimed in claim 22, wherein said gaseous pressurisation medium with low moisture content comprises air.